



The NMC register

NMC Nursing &
Midwifery
Council

31 MARCH 2018



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The big picture

At the end of March 2018 there were 690,278 nurses and midwives on our register – 495 fewer than at the end of March 2017.

Between March 2017 and March 2018:



The number of nurses and midwives **from the UK** increased by **1,321**



The number of nurses and midwives **from the EEA** decreased by **2,909**



The number of nurses and midwives from **outside the EEA** increased by **1,093**

- Between March 2017 and March 2018 we saw a slight increase in the number of UK nurses and midwives on our register. However, this is still **4,266** fewer than the peak in March 2016.
- **5,577** fewer people from the EEA joined our register in 2017/2018 than in 2016/2017 (**a drop of 87 percent**). And **881** more people left it (**an increase of 29 percent**).
- Of the four fields of nursing practice, the only field that has increased in size is **children's nursing**. All other fields (mental health nursing, adult nursing and learning disability nursing) have shown a gradual decrease over the past five years.
- While the overall number of nurses on our register decreased between March 2017 and March 2018, the number of midwives **grew by 473**.



Why are people leaving?

We asked people who had left our register to select their top three reasons for leaving. We had 3,496 responses. 3,137 of the respondents were from the UK, 227 were from the EEA.

The top three reasons UK nurses and midwives gave were:



I have retired

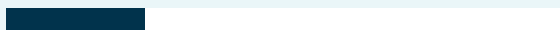


52%

gave this as one of their top 3 reasons



Staffing levels

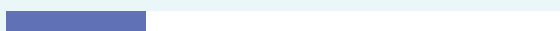


26%

gave this as one of their top 3 reasons



My personal circumstances have changed



25%

gave this as one of their top 3 reasons

Top reasons that EEA nurses and midwives gave for leaving the register:



I am leaving or have left the UK

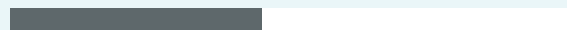


59%

gave this as one of their top 3 reasons



Brexit has encouraged me to consider working outside the UK

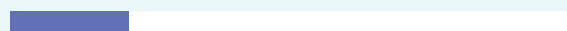


47%

gave this as one of their top 3 reasons



My personal circumstances have changed



22%

gave this as one of their top 3 reasons

About our register



In order to protect the public, we keep a register of all nurses and midwives who meet the standards needed to be able to practise in the UK.

Nurses and midwives need to maintain these standards and revalidate once every three years in order to remain on our register.

We currently publish data from our register every six months.

How to interpret our data

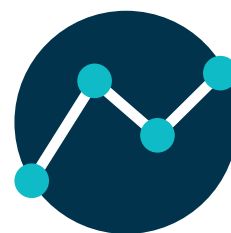
Our register tells us how many nurses and midwives are currently able to practise in the UK. Not everyone on our register will currently be working as a nurse or midwife, or working in the field they are registered in.

People from the UK, EEA and outside the EEA all join our register via different routes. When we say that someone is from the UK, EEA or outside the EEA, we mean that they joined our register via that particular route.

Our register is constantly fluctuating and can vary considerably from the start of the month to the end of the month. Our data only offers a snapshot in time.

The figures showing the number of people on our register are taken from the last day of March in each year. The number of joiners and leavers are cumulative totals from the whole year (1 April – 31 March).

Size of the register



The size of the register has been decreasing since it peaked in 2016 and our latest data shows that this trend is continuing.

FIGURE 1: TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE ON THE REGISTER BY REGISTRATION TYPE

Registration Type	March 2014	March 2015	March 2016	March 2017	March 2018
Midwife	31,091	32,113	33,246	34,554	35,830
Nurse	639,028	644,441	649,668	647,605	646,637
Nurse & midwife	10,770	10,257	9,642	8,614	7,811
SCPHN only	10	0	0	0	0
	680,899	686,811	692,556	690,773	690,278

Nurses and midwives from the UK

We saw a small increase in the total number of people from the UK on our register (1,321) in the year between March 2017 and March 2018. However, this is still 6,823 fewer than the peak in March 2015.

FIGURE 2: NURSES AND MIDWIVES WHOSE INITIAL REGISTRATION WAS IN THE UK

Month and year	Total UK nurses and midwives
March 2014	592,960
March 2015	593,548
March 2016	590,991
March 2017	585,404
March 2018	586,725

Joining the register

The number of nurses and midwives from the UK joining our register for the first time has increased by 1,691 – the highest it's been for four years.

Leaving the register

25,400 UK nurses and midwives left our register last year. This is 4,034 fewer than in the previous year, when we saw a sharp peak in the number leaving (29,434).



FIGURE 3: NURSES AND MIDWIVES FROM THE UK JOINING THE REGISTER FOR THE FIRST TIME

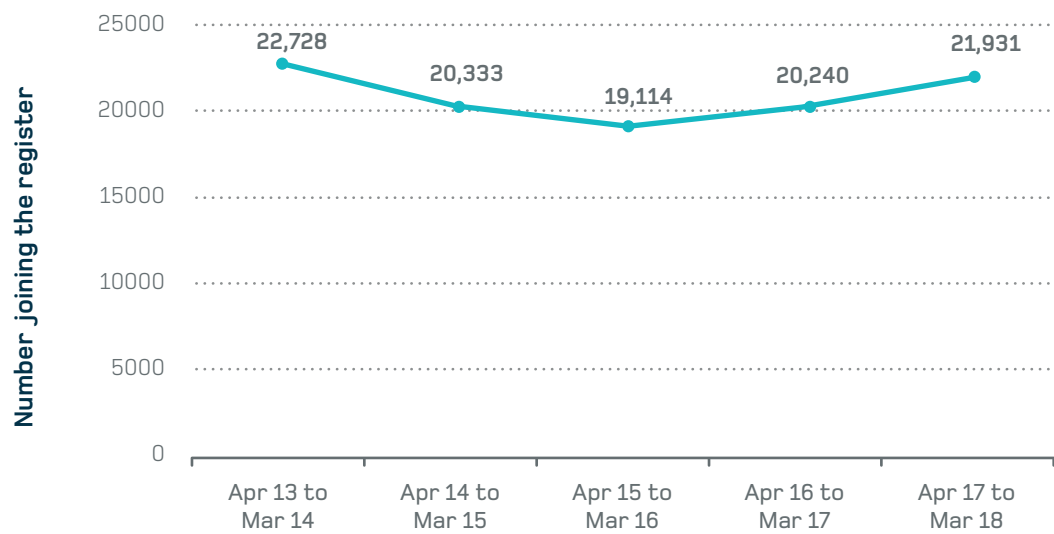
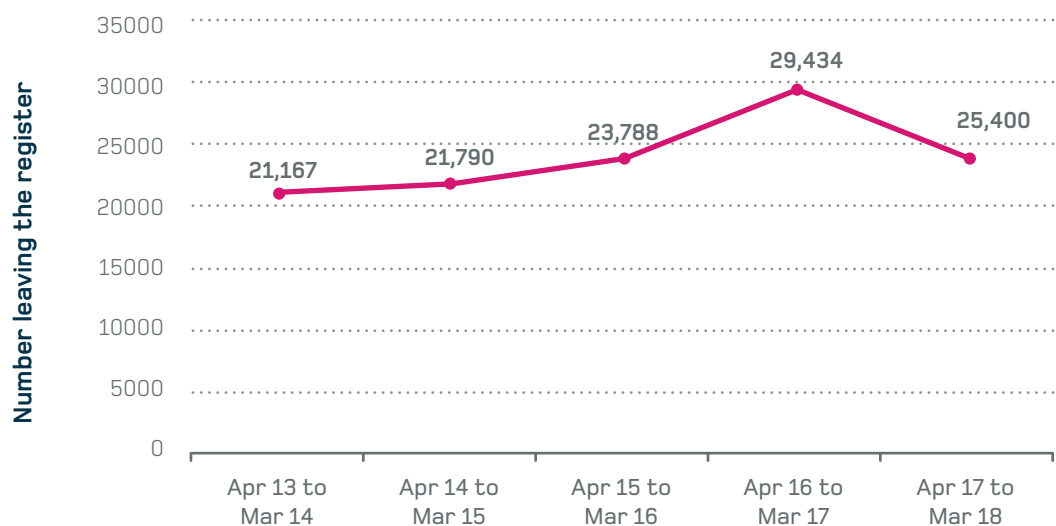


FIGURE 4: NURSES AND MIDWIVES FROM THE UK WHO LEFT THE REGISTER



“I decided to retire early due to the frustrations of working in the NHS”

UK SURVEY RESPONDENT

“The workload was continually increasing while the number of trained staff were decreasing”

UK SURVEY RESPONDENT

Nurses and midwives from the EEA

There were 2,909 fewer people from the EEA on our register in March 2018 compared with March 2017, a decrease of 8 percent.

FIGURE 5: NURSES AND MIDWIVES WHOSE INITIAL REGISTRATION WAS IN THE EEA

Month and year	Total on our register	Total EEA nurses and midwives	Proportion of our register
March 2014	680,899	20,916	3.1%
March 2015	686,811	27,012	3.9%
March 2016	692,556	34,572	5.0%
March 2017	690,773	38,024	5.5%
March 2018	690,278	35,115	5.1%

FIGURE 6: NURSES AND MIDWIVES FROM THE EEA JOINING THE REGISTER FOR THE FIRST TIME

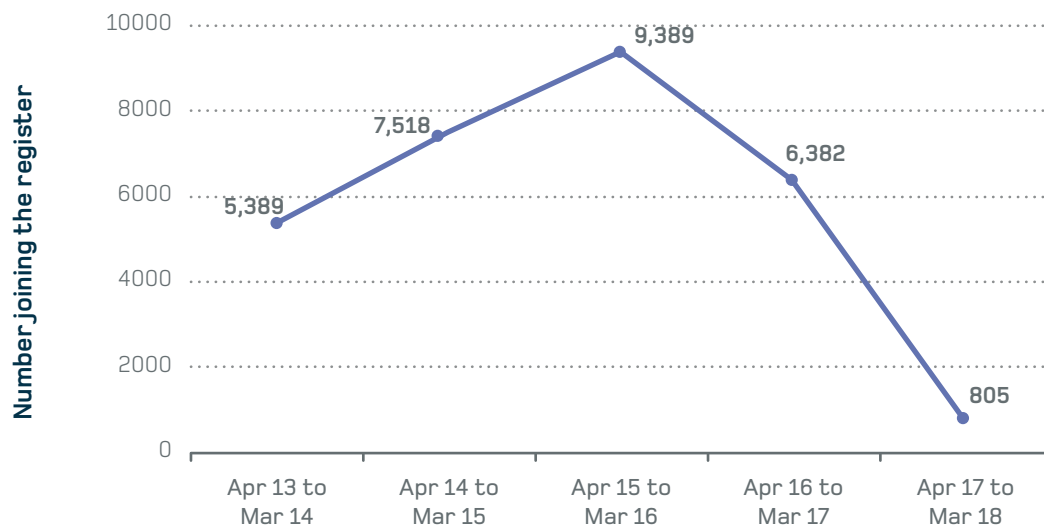
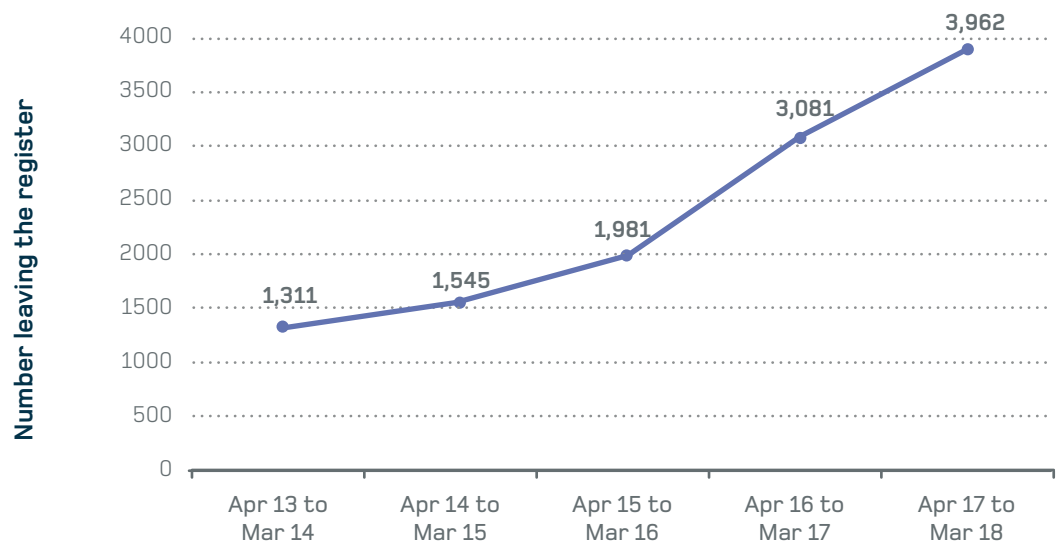




FIGURE 7: NURSES AND MIDWIVES FROM THE EEA WHO LEFT THE REGISTER



“After the result of the Brexit referendum, it took a long time to announce what would happen to EU nurses working in the UK. My colleagues and I needed to plan our lives, and could not wait for a letter telling us to leave.”

EEA SURVEY RESPONDENT

“Staffing levels are poor, which leads to frustration as staff cannot cope with the increased workload”

EEA SURVEY RESPONDENT

Nurses and midwives from outside the EEA



The number of people on the register from outside the EEA has increased every year since 2015.

FIGURE 8: NURSES AND MIDWIVES WHOSE INITIAL REGISTRATION WAS OUTSIDE THE EEA

Month and year	Total nurses and midwives from outside the EEA
March 2014	67,023
March 2015	66,251
March 2016	66,993
March 2017	67,345
March 2018	68,438



Anthony

Silvia

Profile of the register

Age

The two largest age groups on the register are people aged 41–50 and aged 51–60.

Together these two age groups account for 56 percent of the total register. This is consistent with what we have seen in previous years.

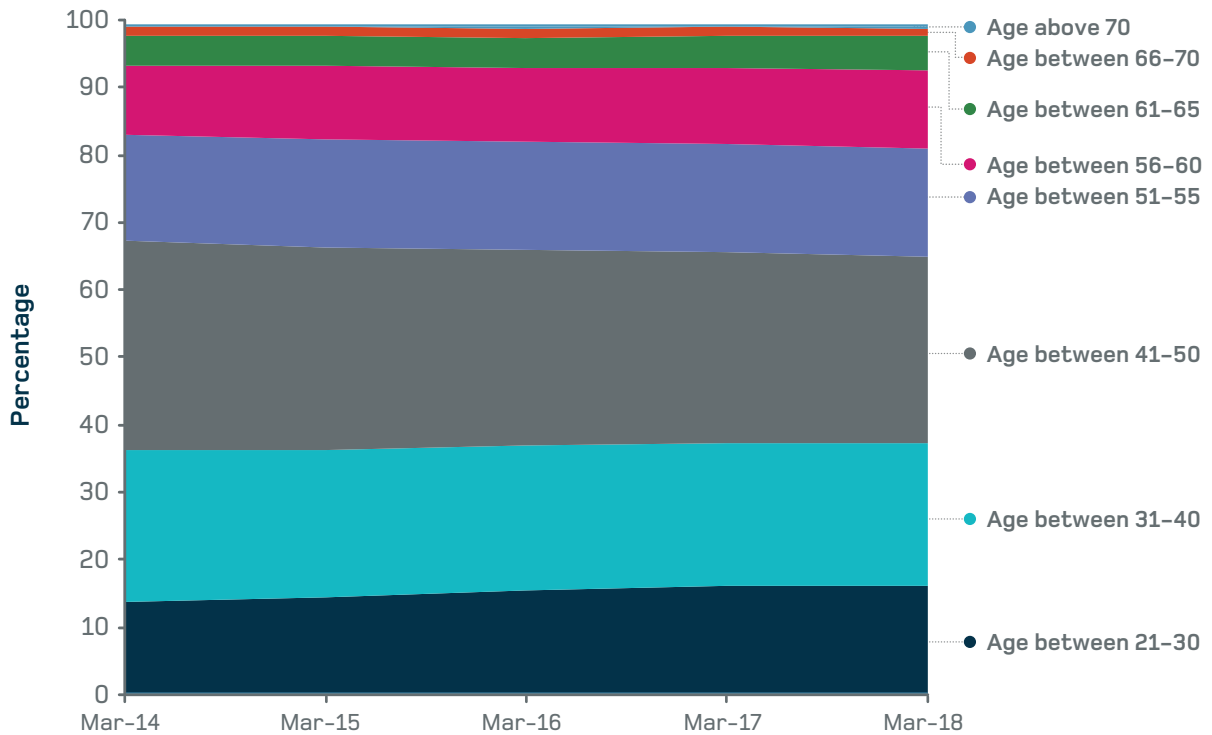
However, we have seen a change in the oldest and youngest age brackets on the register.

The proportion of people on our register who are under 30 or over 50 is increasing.

This means that the age profile of the register is becoming more polarised.

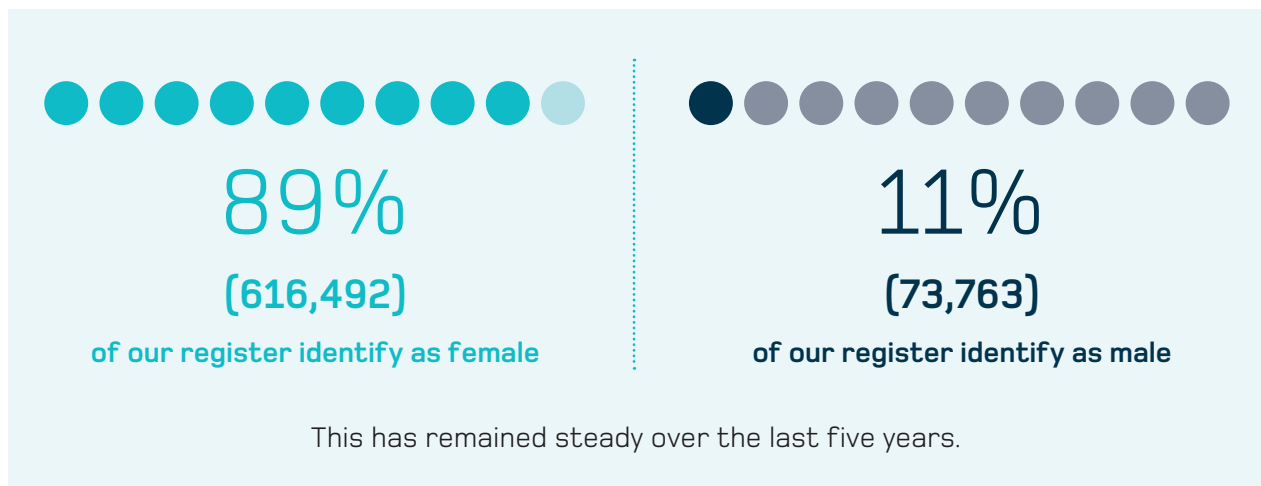
Increases to the over 50 age bracket could be linked to changes in the wider UK workforce, where the number of older workers is growing.

FIGURE 9: AGE PROFILE OF THE REGISTER

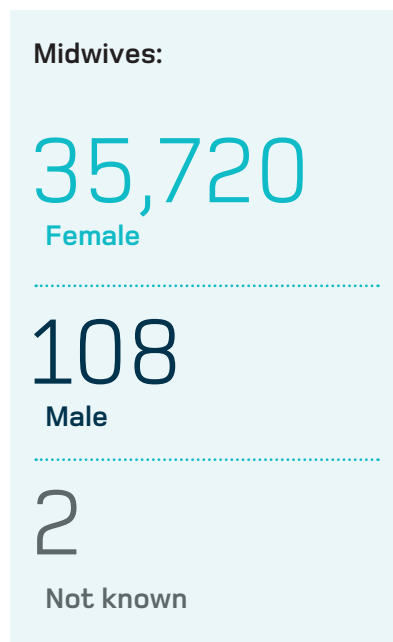
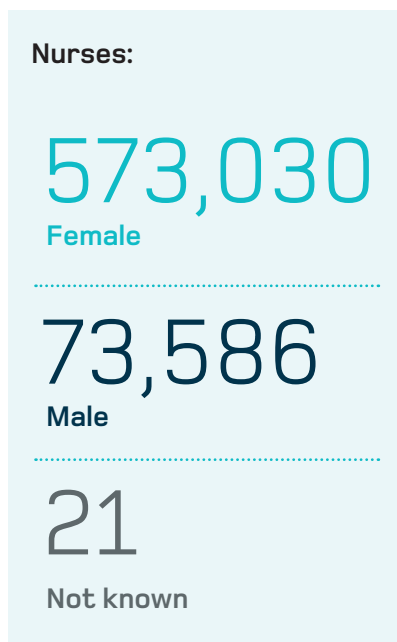




Gender



15



Field of nursing practice



Between March 2017 and March 2018, the number of nurses registered in each field decreased, except for in children's nursing.

This data doesn't tell us what role nurses are currently working in. Nurses can hold more than one qualification and don't always work in the fields they are registered in.

FIGURE 10: NURSES REGISTERED IN THE FOUR FIELDS OF PRACTICE

Month and Year	Field of practice			
	Adult	Children	Learning disabilities	Mental health
March 2014	526,058	46,309	18,933	91,325
March 2015	529,200	47,270	18,546	90,953
March 2016	532,469	48,116	18,163	90,068
March 2017	528,818	48,742	17,503	88,741
March 2018	524,891	49,793	17,174	88,421



Why are people leaving?

We surveyed nurses and midwives who left our register between June 2017 and November 2017 to ask them why they left. 3,496 people responded to the survey.

We asked respondents to select their top three reasons for leaving the register from a list of 18 options. 72 percent of the respondents were aged 51 and over. We'd expect this, because we know a lot of people leave the register due to retirement.

The age profile of UK respondents is different to that of EEA respondents. Only 8.2 percent of those from the UK were aged between 21 and 40, whereas around three quarters (77.6 percent) of those from the EEA were in this age group.

FIGURE 11: TOP THREE REASONS FOR LAPSING GIVEN BY UK NURSES AND MIDWIVES (N=3,137)

Reason	Total citing this as one of their top three reasons for leaving	Percentage citing this as one of their top three reasons
I have retired	1,627	51.9%
Staffing levels	823	26.2%
My personal circumstances changed (For example, I experienced ill health or have caring responsibilities)	797	25.4%



FIGURE 12: TOP THREE REASONS FOR LAPSING GIVEN BY EEA NURSES AND MIDWIVES (N=227)

Reason	Total citing this as one of their top three reasons for leaving	Percentage citing this as one of their top three reasons
I am leaving or have left the UK	133	58.6%
Brexit has encouraged me to consider working outside the UK	106	46.7%
My personal circumstances changed (For example, I experienced ill health or have caring responsibilities)	49	21.6%

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FIGURE 13: TOP THREE REASONS FOR LAPSING GIVEN BY NURSES AND MIDWIVES FROM OUTSIDE THE EEA (N=132)

Reason	Total citing this as one of their top three reasons for leaving	Percentage citing this as one of their top three reasons
I am leaving or have left the UK	60	45.5%
I was concerned about not being able to meet the revalidation requirements	32	24.2%
Poor pay and benefits	31	23.5%

